



VII. Marriage & Divorce

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

Beginning in 1997, Louisiana residents applying for marriage licenses were given a choice between a traditional marriage and a covenant marriage. A covenant marriage differs from a traditional marriage in that the couple agrees to complete premarital counseling and signs a notarized affidavit in which they agree to seek marital counseling if problems develop during the marriage and to accept a limited set of grounds for legal separation or divorce.

In 1997, a total of 39,662 marriages occurred in Louisiana, a decrease of 559 marriages from the 1996 total of 40,221. One hundred forty-seven of these marriages were covenant marriages. Louisiana's 1997 marriage rate was 9.1 marriages per 1,000 population. In the 1990s, state marriage rates have risen to a level slightly higher than national rates.

Louisiana divorce reports are submitted each year by approximately 75% of the state's 64 parishes, and many of the certificates that are submitted contain incomplete information. In 1997, 46 parishes reported a total of 13,836 divorces to the Vital Records Registry. No reports were submitted by 18 of the state's 64 parishes.

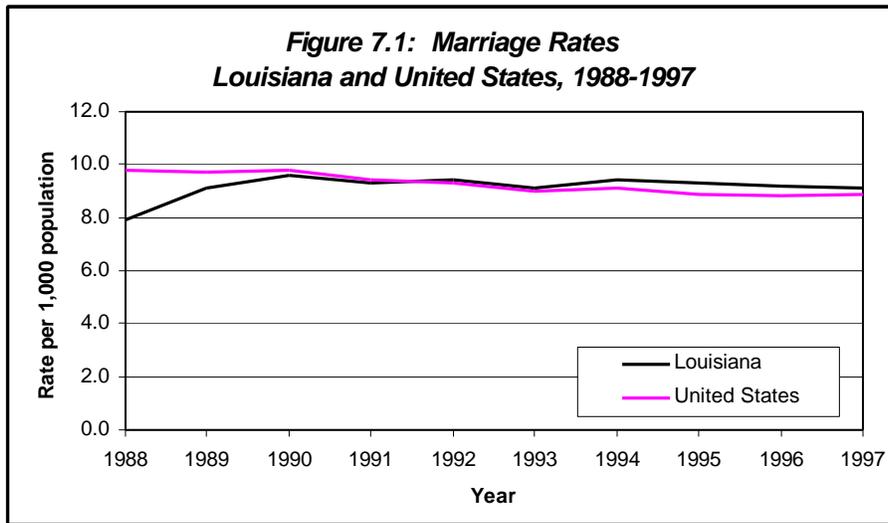
**Table 7.1: Marriage Counts and Rates
Louisiana and United States, 1988-1997**

Year	Louisiana		United States
	Number	Rate* +	Rate*
1988	33974	7.9	9.8
1989	38574	9.1	9.7
1990	40443	9.6	9.8
1991	39161	9.3	9.4
1992	40053	9.4	9.3
1993	39364	9.1	9.0
1994	40405	9.4	9.1
1995	40516	9.3	8.9
1996	40221	9.2	8.8
1997	39662	9.1	8.9

*Rate per 1,000 population

+Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics



Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

TABLE 7.2: MARRIAGES, FINAL DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS GRANTED LOUISIANA, 1997						
PARISH	MARRIAGES			DIVORCES BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE	ANNULMENTS BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE	
	BY PARISH OF ISSUE OF LICENSE	BY PARISH OF OCCURRENCE	COVENANT (AFTER 8/14/97)			
STATE	39662	39662	147	13836	106	
ACADIA	444	478	2	225	5	
ALLEN	235	239	1	*	*	
ASCENSION	701	651	2	364	2	
ASSUMPTION	159	183	0	46	0	
AVOUELLES	382	420	0	*	*	
BEAUREGARD	342	315	1	134	2	
BIENVILLE	112	156	0	72	0	
BOSSIER	790	1004	4	553	1	
CADDO	2295	1970	4	1122	1	
CALCASIEU	2136	1987	4	828	0	
CALDWELL	97	106	0	71	0	
CAMERON	61	89	0	19	0	
CATAHOULA	105	121	1	28	0	
CLAIBORNE	97	106	1	54	0	
CONCORDIA	244	225	0	26	0	
DESOTO	150	187	2	*	*	
E BATON ROUGE	3557	3259	24	2036	35	
EAST CARROLL	35	51	1	20	0	
E FELICIANA	168	191	0	67	0	
EVANGELINE	287	328	0	80	4	
FRANKLIN	211	201	0	124	0	
GRANT	94	135	0	*	*	
IBERIA	594	618	0	*	*	
IBERVILLE	203	273	1	*	*	
JACKSON	138	128	0	3	0	
JEFFERSON	4044	3672	13	2255	5	
JEFF DAVIS	281	300	1	127	0	
LAFAYETTE	1646	1460	10	*	*	
LAFOURCHE	770	741	1	393	1	
LASALLE	146	152	0	69	0	
LINCOLN	403	332	4	174	0	
LIVINGSTON	730	871	3	*	*	
MADISON	127	121	1	*	*	
MOREHOUSE	212	213	1	150	3	
NATCHITOCHE	346	383	0	147	1	
ORLEANS	4908	5334	16	719	0	
OUACHITA	1189	1163	10	866	3	
PLAQUEMINES	154	216	0	93	0	
POINTE COUPEE	158	189	1	81	7	
RAPIDES	1248	1242	8	630	12	
RED RIVER	107	104	1	*	*	
RICHLAND	152	165	0	*	*	
SABINE	196	203	1	129	0	
ST BERNARD	664	626	4	338	0	
ST CHARLES	345	326	0	185	0	
ST HELENA	25	37	0	*	*	
ST JAMES	127	191	0	5	1	
ST JOHN	290	307	0	5	0	
ST LANDRY	768	785	0	253	21	
ST MARTIN	309	345	2	68	0	
ST MARY	540	537	1	*	*	
ST TAMMANY	1725	1724	11	*	*	
TANGIPAHOA	964	931	1	171	0	
TENSAS	42	58	0	*	*	
TERREBONNE	944	973	2	575	0	
UNION	143	151	2	78	0	
VERMILION	389	419	0	199	1	

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VERNON	591	610	2	13	0
WASHINGTON	386	388	1	*	*
WEBSTER	374	329	1	110	0
W BATON ROUGE	234	179	1	*	*
WEST CARROLL	73	89	0	*	*
W FELICIANA	89	157	0	45	0
WINN	186	185	0	86	1
OUT OF STATE	-	33	-	*	*

*NO DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT DATA REPORTED BY CLERK OF COURT